

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the claim amendments above and the following remarks and arguments, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 12, 13, 19, 23, 31, 35, and 39 are amended. They are rewritten in independent form to recite all the elements of claim 11 from which they directly depend. No new matter is added by the amendments.

Claims 1-10, 15-18, and 27-30 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claim 11 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42 are pending.

II. Withdrawal of Previous Rejections

Applicant appreciatively thanks the Examiner for the withdrawal of rejection of: claims 11-30 and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,783,292 to Tokito et al. ("Tokito"); claims 19-26 and 39-42 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Tokito in view of the Examiner's statement of ordinary skill in the art; and claims 11-22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,097,147.

III. Acknowledgment of Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciatively thanks the Examiner for the acknowledgment of allowable subject matter in claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42.

IV. Claim Objections

Claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (namely, claim 11) but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the elements of claim 11.

Applicant has amended claims 12, 13, 19, 23, 31, 35, and 39 to be in independent form by reciting therein all the elements of claim 11 from which they originally depend. The remaining claims (i.e., claims 14, 20-22, 24-26, 32-34, 36-38, and 40-42) depend from one of the amended claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objections of claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42 be withdrawn.

V. Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0051284 to Ueda et al. ("Ueda") in view of the Examiner's statement of ordinary skill in the art, or in the alternative, over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0192499 to Tokailin et al. ("Tokailin") in view of the Examiner's statement of ordinary skill in the art, or further in the alternative, over U.S. Patent No. 6,631,147 to Taniguchi et al. ("Taniguchi") in view of the Examiner's statement of ordinary skill in the art. The Examiner states that either Ueda, Tokailin, or Taniguchi in combination with the Examiner's statement of ordinary skill in the art renders claim 11 obvious.

Claim 11 has been canceled. Therefore, the rejection of claim 11 is moot.

CONCLUSION

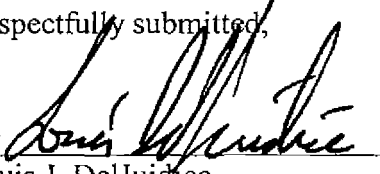
In view of the foregoing, it is believed that claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42 are in condition for allowance and it is respectfully requested that claims 12-14, 19-26, and 31-42 be allowed and the case passed to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,

By


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